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TYCI

#25 FREE

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Mary Timony

Bailey Constas interviews the Helium / Wild Flag musician about her latest project, Ex Hex.

How did you form Ex Hex?

I was writing a bunch of songs then wanted to start playing live. I started jamming with Laura Harris who's in some really cool bands in DC like The Aquarium, Benjy Ferree. I found Betsy in a few cool bands, she's an insanely great musician. We started jamming in this place in DC this practice space in our friend's backyard, just a bunch of hardcore bands practice there. We rehearsed a lot and started playing shows.

How does Ex Hex differ from your previous work with Helium and Wild Flag?

This band is really a gang. We have a different style. We approached writing the record in a different way. We are more of a band that sounds like a certain era of music I guess rather than something that sounds like an artistic expression. It's more of like a fun, rocking party band but with deep parts as well.

Then what kind of era would you say you sound like?

Maybe some of the songs are influenced by early '80s power rock. I hate the word "power" for some reason. Maybe some '70s glam like Slade, but also the songs are our own songs. I think this band has a classic rock and roll sound but I don't think were trying to copy that.

What was the writing process like for this album?

There was a lot of recording, writing, recording, listening back and rearranging them. We had the end product in mind. We wanted to make a record that's something you'd want to put on at a party, jukebox or listen to at home and make you dance around. Rather than just trying to express some artistic vision. I wanted the lyrics to be direct and understandable and not self-referential and difficult to

interpret. I just wanted the emotions to be more direct.

What was the hardest part about writing the album?

I think we had a really big time crunch. We toured to SXSW right before we started recording. Then in the middle of the recording

session-I can't remember who got sick first-but we all got sick. We were working all day and all night which looking back, I'm glad we did it that way but at the time it was insane. It's good sometimes but we were almost falling on the side of doing it too fast. Sometimes it's good to be pushed but you don't want to half ass it. There wasn't a point where we were sitting on it.

What was the most influential concert you went to?

Fugazi. In terms of just being a band live, they were just insane. I'd never seen anything like that again. The energy in the room was so intense. I don't know how much I tried to make music that sounded like them. They have their own style, but just the energy and that was around in those shows, I try to do that.

What's the strangest show you've played?

One time I remember on this tour when Helium was opening for Sleater-Kinney in Slovenia, everyone at the show was completely wasted. We played at this community centre where everyone was drunk. Old people and kids were there. At the end I was trying to get paid by their promoter and he was passed out. We had to load gear over him he was so drunk he passed out on the floor.

I always hate to point this out, because it shouldn't matter, but being realistic of the state of our culture…. Do you find yourself running into any boundaries being an all girl group?

I mean, I think we're all good buddies, and we love spending time together and have a ton of fun. You can have that with any gender, but it definitely feels like a gang of girls. But I don't ever think about people's gender I definitely don't think about my gender playing music.

I definitely have to say that in rock music, now indie rock, whatever it's called. It's so different now. There are so many more girls playing music than there used to be. When I was in my twenties, it definitely used to feel like you were a female car mechanic. Now it's like the same almost. It's great because nobody wants to think about it. I just want to play music.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE ON EX HEX, HEAD TO EXHEXBAND.COM.

TALK NERDY TO ME

LOGO: FLOODGRUNT

Talk Nerdy To Me is a new monthly feature by Fen McCallum, celebrating women in areas of interest slightly off the beaten track. For the first entry, we talk Dungeons and Dragons.

Pathfinder is a re-branded version of D&D 3.5. It is a pencil and paper role-playing game that allows players to enact epic adventures set in a high fantasy world. At Geek Retreat Glasgow, I caught up with Lorna Atkinson and Claire Young from the group after their Pathfinder game...

What made you want to come along today?

Claire: I play other Role Playing Games with and main group of friends that've been gaming for a year, our main Game Master has went to Poland, so I was kind of needing a fix! This is the first time I've played something as rigid as Pathfinder, but I really enjoyed it.

Lorna, how did you end up playing in the Pathfinder Society?

Lorna: Me and my friends are big Pathfinder fans, and one of them recommended the Pathfinder Society. We found out there was one in Glasgow every fortnight, and we thought we would go along and see what it's like. Since then, we've come to every session for the last six months!

What is it that you like about Pathfinder?

Claire: Well, it's nice to play something that's a bit more, kind of 'fighty', and dungeon 'crawley'. It did also have a social aspect which is great for me. I'm usually playing more, pure role play stuff, with just the occasional dice roll, so it's a bit of a change for me. It's good.

Lorna: I really like playing

Pathfinder, the adventures you do are great, you end up having great stories that you can look back on. You get a great "Pathfinder vibe", and there's a lot of great people you can meet as well. It's just great.

Lorna, do you feel that a Game Master has ever treated you differently because of your gender?

Lorna: I don't really think so. Even though I've been playing for two, or maybe three years, I still consider myself as if I'm not really very good at it. So whenever I'm playing a game, I tend to mention to the GM, "Look, I might need some support." And I've never noticed any difference. They are just really helpful and friendly.

That's great! And what about other male players? Have you ever had any difficulties?

Lorna: I've never really had any problems, no. The only game that I felt intimidated in was in my first; it was five other male players, and it was a male game master, and looking about the room, I couldn't see any other women. I sat down, I thought, just forget it, it'll be fine, and I had a really good time.

Are there any changes that you would like to see to the way Pathfinder is advertised or run?

Lorna: I think it would be good to show the amount of women that are here, because they do exist. They do play, and they are just as good. I think they could promote that more - the game is for everyone.

And what about in the way that it's run?

Claire: I think you find, in Geek Culture, a lot of it is male dominated, and it is directed more at men. But Pathfinder's different, and the GMs here aren't like that. They're kind of the exception to the rule.

Pathfinder allows players to create any character they can imagine. How does it deal with gender and sexuality?

Lorna: I don't think it has much of an affect. I've not really experienced that much in the game, I've only experienced it when I played a cleric of Shelyn. She's the Goddess of beauty and music, so I used that for my character for diplomacy, to flirt with men, but I never really used it much in the game.

Is that option available for male characters and for men to play as well?

Lorna: Absolutely! A man can worship Shelyn, just the same as a woman can.

Claire: In Pathfinder, from what I've seen so far, I don't think so, but in some other RPGs it is really prevalent.

What would your advice be to other women who may be interested in getting involved in Pathfinder and other role playing games?

Lorna: Don't be afraid. Just come along and see what people are like. Here, they are all really friendly.

Claire: Definitely, one of the reasons I don't feel worried about coming in is everybody is really welcoming.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE AND MORE IN THE TALK NERDY TO ME SERIES, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE ON SCOTTISH PATHFINDERS, CHECK OUT FACEBOOK.COM/SCOTTISHPATHFINDERS.

Sleater-Kinney Is For Lovers

They're back. And Lis Ferla is really bloody excited.

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So, where were you when you found out that Sleater-Kinney were getting back together? I was at my desk, in an office directly across the road from the one where, eight years ago, I found out that my favourite band were calling an 'indefinite hiatus'. The idea was never that the trio were breaking up: rather, as singer / guitarist Carrie Brownstein put it in an email to her sometime colleagues at NPR, that the band was never "something you can do half-assed or half-heartedly"…

I saw them twice: once in London, the first time I travelled to the capital for the sake of a band. I danced with my best friends Stevie and Jo, and my friend Sapph met a boy down the front that she kept close to her for years. I was 23, and I was going to make it a round trip with a night in Belfast too if my boss hadn't pitched a fit when she saw from the annual leave request that I was planning to jeopardise an early professional commitment for the sake of words and guitar. (I lost that job in the recession, but the band came back to me - so who really won that one?)

And then, a month before they announced their hiatus, Sleater-Kinney played the Oran Mor…

That night I stalked Corin Tucker in the loos, and got her to sign my ticket with the kohl that was the only writing implement I had in my bag - a fact that, almost a decade later and as a semi-professional music journalist, I still can't bring myself to get embarrassed about. When I see them for the third time at the ABC next year, I'll want to do it all over again at 32 and show her the tattoo - a Bikini Kill turntable logo spitting out a bar from their duelling heartbreaker 'One More Hour' - I got in the band's honour earlier this year.

In the end there was no drama, no fanfare: just eleven years and six fantastic albums, and a trio that the music press were eventually forced into respecting for their longevity and their talent regardless of the fact that they happened to be girls. I can't wait to see what the next chapter holds.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. CHECK OUT LASTYEARSGIRL.PIXLET.NET FOR MORE OF LIS' WRITING.

TYCI & STEREO PRESENT:

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I THINK SHE WAS A SHE

The spoken word scene in Glasgow has been growing in strength and popularity with a host of new nights across the city. This scene is particularly popular with female artists who are finding a voice and a new platform for expression. One such artist is Leyla Josephine. Her work often focuses on feminism and issues surrounding women. Recently her poem 'I Think She was a She', which addresses abortion, provoked an extreme negative reaction. Catriona Reilly spoke to Leyla about her experience and how it has affected her.

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What has the general response been to 'I Think She Was A She'?

It's been a real mix. I've received hundreds of messages and comments from young women all over the world telling me they'd found comfort in the video, and it's blown me away. In Glasgow, women are coming up to me in clubs or in shops telling me they've seen the video and how they've been through the same thing, but I've also received a substantial amount of abuse. You only have to Google my name to find it all. The video went viral mostly on American, right-wing Christian sites (ironically, this is actually where I got most of my views). My official Facebook - which was once full of thank you's, notes of strength and a place of safety for myself and other women - became a place of hatred and violent words very suddenly.

How does it feel?

It was quite scary to start with. I didn't know how to control it. I had to delete my Facebook for a few days, just while things settled down. Like many women speaking out on the internet, I was silenced. Luckily, I live in a country where people are less likely to actually do anything to you. America is a different story - they have very strong and very different views on abortion. I can now laugh at most of it, the comments are mostly from white, American middle aged men, and I would have never asked their opinion of abortion in the first place. I do try not to read them, but my friends send me the funny ones. My favourite one that I couldn't stop laughing at was, "I can't tell by her Scottish accent if she's a brilliant poet or as dumb as a teapot". I did have a mother calling me a 'feminazi jihadist' which got extra

points for ignorance.

What motivated you to write it?
I've been a performance artist for five years now and I always try to make work from a personal perspective. I believe that if we share stories and ask difficult questions in art, we can learn more about the world we live in. I also think that talking about things openly dilutes shame and I think shame and guilt are dangerous things. I hoped that my video empowered young women not to be scared to speak out about their experiences and maybe find comfort in mine.

What has the response been like from religious groups?
I cannot speak for all of them, but it seems like a lot of the comments are from a Christian or Catholic perspective. However, saying that, I also have lots of Christian supporters and the views of a couple do not account for the whole religion. In fact, a lot of my close family are Christian and Catholic. I can tell they find it difficult but they still support me and love me without judgement.
At the end of the day, I fundamentally disagree with the views of these religions on abortion. I do not believe that a foetus is a life as they do. Everyone has as much a right as I do, to talk about what they believe in, but we have to rethink about how we debate and discuss our differences. Does it always have to be with such violence and aggression?

Do you think it will affect your creative practice?
I don't think I'll ever use my full name again. My arts practice will probably be defined by this poem forever because realistically I'll never have such a huge response for anything I do in the future. I can also never delete it - the internet never forgets. It makes me question my opinion on censorship and the internet being used for feminist discussion. It's such an anti-female space, how can we keep women and the vulnerable safe online, without getting rid of freedom of speech?

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE ON LEYLA, VISIT FACEBOOK.COM/LEYLAJOSEPHINE1.

HEY PATRIARCHY, YOU'RE FIRED

An opinion piece by Kate Bailey on feminism and when saying enough is enough.

We're in a time of change. It's exciting. For the first time in a long while, it feels like the equality movement has momentum. The revolution is far from over but the discourse is changing in a positive, progressive way. It's quite ironic how our capitalistic attitudes encourage us to discard people, places and things when they do not perform to standard, but when it comes to our own system of societal governance, we just give it a warning and send it back to it's desk. When it happens again, we're shocked?

However, what we're seeing now is the system of patriarchy being questioned: this is the new dialogue we're seeing worldwide. Most topically and as an example, Emma Watson's address to the United Nations.

As we look forward, we must also look back. We must look back at the patriarchy women and men have suffered through these last, say, 2000 or so years.

It's like sifting through the rubble of a burning building. The smoke makes your eyes sting and everything's a charred mess, but you have resolve to find anything you can salvage. We have learned that fear and control doesn't work. Well, yes they do have a way of motivating a uniform societal response, but for every human that lay beneath the earth having died as a result, we have to finally admit it does not work. We have learned the consequences of what happens to humans when their morality intertwines with irrationality. Morality holds our most intimate personal beliefs, so it's no surprise it explodes like a chemical reaction when we are presented something we're told will threaten these beliefs, that we feel threaten us. The real threat being: humans who feel another

human's life is worth less than theirs, for some reason. It's embarrassing humanity has remained ignorant to the fact that this is what kills people, yet we act like it's equality and tolerance that's going to throw the balance out? Like that's going to kill more people somehow? Like kids in love, irrationality rears it's ugly head when we don't understand something that gets too close to our heart. If we can see this, we must admit that this is all a result of patriarchy, the system that's created this. I can't even exercise my vocation without the complete irrationality of it right in my face: What do you mean I have to sign a contract saying I can be instantly dismissed for any form of discrimination, yet you're paying me less than you would be paying a man?

Systems include the shining beacon of the human ego: governments. Government is the next most patriarchal platform behind religion. Women have been blocked out of the game for a majority of the time we've had it, again only 2000 or so years, with modern excuses like 'they're too emotional due to the menstruation cycle". What a filthy little idea. Women don't need to be bleeding from our vagina for five days to make decisions that balance political sensibility with a need to 'talk through it' or 'compassion' or 'consideration'. Shouldn't governments be considering the people their decisions are effecting above anything else?

There's been years of apathy though, and years of fear about what it means when you speak out. We seem convinced that strengthening our personal beliefs and our confidence to stand by them means nothing in the bigger picture. As if we don't believe anything we can do can create the change. We don't realise we don't have to be aggressive about it. Like that's a surprise when it's the only we we've learned to vocalise our beliefs. It's much simpler though, we don't need to be abrasive. It's just educating through existing though; let your actions speak for your beliefs. And as needed, use your voice when the idea of equality is threatened. Hopefully you'll need it less and less as we progress. The most important thing to remember: when you look in the mirror, see a human being. Don't see you gender, don't see your race, don't see the reasons you don't look like everyone else or societies idea of success. Look in the mirror and see a human being worthy of compassion and worthy of every right you inherit by being born on the same earth as every other human being. Extend the same moment of rationality to every person you meet; look at them as if you were looking into your mirror. Fire patriarchy for discrimination, spread this gospel and watch the world continue to change. Be apart of the momentum.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE OF KATE'S WORK, HEAD TO LITTLEJOY.DE.

TYCI ALL DAYER

FOR THIS YEAR'S **CHRISTMAS EVENT**, TYCI IS TEAMING WITH **STEREO** AND **OLD HAIRDRESSERS** FOR AN **ALL-DAY CELEBRATION** WITH VISUAL AND THEATRE ARTISTS PERFORMING ALONGSIDE THE LIKES OF **MARNIE, JEN LONG DJ, PATRICIA PANTHER, KIRSTIN INNES, NICOLA MEIGHAN DJ, HONEYBLOOD, CHVRCHES DJS** AND **FRANCES MCKEE (THE VASELINES)**

SATURDAY 20 DECEMBER 12.30PM - 4AM
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TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM STEREOCAFEBAR.COM
DAY PASS: £3 | EVENING PASS: £10 | ALL-DAY: £12

Proceeds from the December raffle will go to Yorkhill Children's Hospital

The latest episode of the TYCI podcast is online now and can be found at soundcloud.com/tyciblog. Our next Subcity show will be Thursday 18 December, 5 - 7pm. Tune in at subcity.org/shows/tyci.

TYCI is a collective run by women.

We have a website where we write about things which affect us and put together features on art, theatre, music, film, politics,current affairs and most things in between. We also talk about similar stuff on our monthly podcasts and radio show on Subcity.

This zine is a collection of some of the content from our site and is distributed in conjunction with our monthly live events.

If you would like to get involved, reply to any of our articles or just generally say hi, hit us up on contact.tyci@gmail.com or visit tyci.org.uk.

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